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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002510

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [KISL](#) [CASC](#) [EAID](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NORTHERN GOVERNORS ON SECURITY SITUATION

REF: (A) ABUJA 2421 (B) ABUJA 2347

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (U) Summary: During a tour of Northern Nigeria the week of September 23, Poloff discussed with six governors--Jigawa, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano and Kaduna--the security situation in their respective states. Presently army troops are responsible for order in Kaduna, Jos, and Tafawa Balewa (Bauchi). The governors voiced concern about three separate security issues: potential reprisals for the violence in Jos and Tafawa Balewa (Bauchi State); protests sparked by the eventual U.S. reprisal action for 9/11; and, on the more distant horizon, political violence in the run up to 2003 elections (electoral violence will be addressed septel). Although ethnic violence is the primary long-term concern, Kano, Katsina and Zamfara may see demonstrations after we respond militarily to the terrorist attacks. Governors there are confident that they can prevent large-scale violence. Most Amcits in the North are long-time residents, and are not likely to be targeted if demonstrations turn violent. End Summary.

Aftermath of Jos Violence

2. (C) Governors Ahmed Makarfi (Kaduna), Rabiw Kwankwaso (Kano) and Saminu Turaki (Jigawa) reported that their states have been directly affected by the Jos violence. Frightened Plateau residents have asked to relocate to their states. Makarfi commented that, besides Hausa-Fulani, he has received formal requests from members of Jos' Igbo and Yoruba communities to relocate to Kaduna State. Both Kaduna and Jigawa have allocated land for new settlements for the Jos refugees.

3. (C) Northern and Middle Belt governors met with the President during the Council of State meeting on September 26 to discuss containing ethnic violence. Makarfi said that President Obasanjo spent the first portion of the meeting taking Governor Joshua Dariye (Plateau) to task for not quelling the violence. Makarfi recounted that Obasanjo's lack of confidence in Dariye was evidenced by his creation of a Federal judicial commission to investigate the Jos eruption. "He never did that for Kaduna, because he trusted we would be fair in our investigation." Makarfi commented that Dariye looked "ashamed," and would not make eye-contact with his Northern colleagues at the Council of State meeting, because they were successful in preventing violence against Christians in their states.

4. (C) The return of bodies to home states for burial has been a traditional trigger for reprisal ethnic violence. Consequently, the FG instituted a standing order prohibiting the transportation of bodies across state lines, which was implemented after the violence in Jos started. This order and the rapid burial of bodies in mass graves helped prevent violence from being sparked elsewhere, Gov. Kwankwaso remarked. The governors also emphasized the importance of co-ordination with traditional rulers and religious leaders in their states to maintain order. Makarfi stressed the importance of traditional rulers. According to him, organized government only reaches to the level of the LGA's (Local Government Areas). However, traditional rulers know and control, to a limited extent, every village in their domain. Makarfi and Kwankwaso averred that the Sultan and Emirs, especially Kano and Zazzau, have worked hard to prevent reprisals for Jos and have roundly condemned the 9/11 attacks.

5. (C) The ethnic groups that targeted the Hausa-Fulani in Jos and Tafawa Balewa are not represented in significant numbers in major northern cities. Due to their geographic concentration, reprisals by the Hausa-Fulani against these ethnic groups could only occur in the original loci of the violence, which are now controlled by the military. This geographic separation has also lessened the likelihood of ethnic reprisals. According to eyewitness accounts, almost all of the Hausa have left Tafawa-Balewa. Their exodus has

left the city without civilian local government administration. The military has taken its place.

16. (C) Makarfi said that in both Jos and Tafawa Balewa, the local ethnic groups "touched the wrong people." He said the Hausa will let it go and go back to business. "If you touch a Fulani man, they remember and they come back--maybe ten years later--to touch you. Dariye is not going to sleep well at night."

17. (C) While the "core" North seems to have prevented further conflict, repercussions from the Jos violence continue in the Middle Belt. A near riot was averted in Makurdi, Benue State, after the prompt intervention of police September 21. Residents of Kubwa, a reasonably affluent exurb of Abuja, formed an inter-religious council to defuse tensions and stem rumors of reprisals, which had heightened tensions there considerably. Some residents of Kubwa and other settlements surrounding Abuja had moved, fearing imminent violence. The conflict in Nasarawa state in June among the Tiv, Jukun and Hausa not only produced a significant number of displaced persons, but has heightened tensions in Kogi and Benue, where many of the displaced are currently residing.

Reactions to 9/11

18. (C) Regarding local reaction to possible U.S. military action, Governors predicted demonstrations in Kano, Katsina and Zamfara states, with possible demonstrations in Zaria. With no USG institutions in the North, and with Americans there being long-term residents, it is unlikely these demonstrations will result in violence against Amcits. The demonstrations may be instigated to serve local political ends, some governors believe.

19. (C) In Zamfara, the VOA stringer in Gusau, Abdullahi Tsafe, played a tape in Hausa for Poloff of the weekly sermon

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delivered by the Zamfara State Commissioner of Religious Affairs following Juma'at prayers on September 21. He translated it as saying that the Commissioner implored all Muslims to "pray for the annihilation of the U.S. if they attack our Muslim brothers in Afghanistan." We will report on the situation in Zamfara in more detail (septel).

110. (C) Governor Kwankwaso believed that "radical Muslims" in Kano would demonstrate, but he thought their efforts would be small-scale and he was confident in his Government's ability to prevent violence. He said he met regularly with the mainstream Ullama and the Emir of Kano, and they have all condemned the attacks on the U.S. He complained that talking to congregations associated with Iraqi mullahs was futile, but said that these were a minority, albeit an active one. Kwankwaso expressed concern that U.S. action not be random or result in needless civilian casualties, and he commented that the only long-term solution was for Western assistance to reduce the economic disparity between poor Muslim populations and the West. The other northern governors expressed similar sentiments: each expressed his profound condolences, followed by an expression of concern that U.S. retaliation be measured, well-considered, and avoid civilian casualties.

111. (U) Comment: The ability of northern governors to prevent reprisals in the wake of Jos represents significant progress over the past two years. Northern governors seem prepared for protests in response to USG military action, and appear confident that possible violence can be contained. Unfortunately, tensions in the Middle Belt remain high, as multiple ethnic groups wrestle for limited economic resources. (The competition in some hot-spots bears religious overtones.) Middle Belt governors in Plateau, Benue, Taraba and Nasarawa appear less prepared than their northern counterparts to manage ethnic violence which may be re-ignited by external events. In his address on Nigeria's Independence Day, President Obasanjo called ethnic violence the biggest threat his Administration faces, and vowed to devote more resources to stemming the problem. Not only will he have to devote material resources and security assets in a more systematic way, Obasanjo must develop a political grand strategy for dealing with this most nettlesome of Nigeria's centrifugal forces. End Comment.
Jeter